

Book Review

The Art and Science of Leadership, 6th edition. By Afsaneh Navawandi. Pearson Education Inc. Publishing as Prentice Hall, US, 2012. ISBN 13: 978-0-13-254458-0. 396 pp. Hardcover, \$161.80.

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The question, whether leadership is innate or developed or learned also has been debated and discussed all over the world. Some people tend to relate this very question with the debate of nature versus nurture. In this context, the book under review, *The Art and Science of Leadership*, puts forward the argument that there are ways to instill leadership traits and to learn what the author refers to as the 'Art' of leadership. The author of the book, Afsaneh Navawandi, covers the complex subject of learning leadership from various perspectives and refers to it as both an Art and as Science. The main argument of the book revolves around the notion that there is a science of leadership and to apply that science is the real art for effective leadership involves challenges, responsibilities and a great level of skills. And contrary to the believe that leaders are born, the author believes that effective leaders can be nurtured as leadership is not only an innate capability.

The book is divided into three parts comprising 10 chapters in total. The first part of the book, *Building Blocks*, revolves around varied dimensions and perspectives of leaders and leadership. The author refers to a leader as influencer and deliberates on the way the influencers influence their followers. The book describes what must be the characteristics of a leaders and how significant it is to have specific goals and hierarchy to start to entertain the idea of having a leader and perform the science and art of leadership. The book points towards the reasons why leaders are required; among all other reasons, the most interesting is the idea that we see leaders as 'romantic ideal', and want to have them to look up to, follow and love. Furthermore, the author discusses the differences between managers and leaders. Not every manager is a leader and vice versa. The difference is the perspective of thinking and vision. Leaders are forward thinking, visionaries and employ macro perspective specter and to create followers not subordinates.

The author further discusses the global and cultural contexts of leadership. In the age of globalization, how do groups and cultures work; how are they interconnected and intermingled; therefore, the foremost point for a leader is to understand these in order to be able to influence. The examples of cultures around the world in terms of high and low context cultures have also been discussed to gain a better understanding of the idea of national cultures and how do they directly impact upon group and organization cultures. It is important for a leader to understand the cultural mindset to be able to employ change and manage it so that it is accepted vertically and horizontally. The apt way to achieve the goal of change is the management of diversity and leading diversity with collectivist approach in the organization. The author also highlights the gender perspective in leadership and how roles of both the genders are different when serving in capacities of leaders and managers. The world has become a global village and importantly the cultures within and the places where organizations are working have had an inevitable effect. The leaders' roles here according to author have

become most important to lead the organization into the phase of change and dynamism that is most important for the era.

A complete chapter has been dedicated to the sources, significance, distribution, role and consequences of power. The author believes that power can transform a leader into a successful leader. It is important for a leader to create followers, who willingly, not forcibly, follow the leader. Although the author assumes that at times exercising authority is important too, showcasing authority is the manager's job, not a leader's trait. The more a leader delegates powers, the more he/she gains in terms of responsibility for the subordinates. That is a difference between a leader and an effective leader. An effective leader thrives on responsibilities. The sources of power may vary and may have detrimental effects on styles of leadership but it is important for a leader to influence, not order.

The second part of the book deals with the contemporary concepts of leadership where the author tended to begin the argument on the evolution of different concepts of leadership by identifying three eras; trait, behavioral and contingency. Although the author describes in detail the differences in all three eras, a combination of all three has been and still is used by each leader. However, a great difference has taken place in the perspective and influence of the decision making by the leaders today. A vital difference in leaders of today and yesterday owes to the diverse nature of the environment and connectivity between individuals with the advent of social media where the role and decisions of a leader can be questioned. In the theories which the author has discussed and explained, the idea of In-Group and Out-Group in LMX Model has a distinctive appeal to it and is very close to how every human being looks at groups and bonds that he/she develops.

According to the author, the newer models of leadership stress upon charisma of the leader and that organizations now have realized the difference between managers and leaders. Their distinctive roles have been understood; therefore, the leaders now have to come up as charismatic leaders in all walks of life. To lead by transforming and leading spiritually, providing the followers with the values which they look for, to understand and give exactly what they want while moving the company and followers towards the specified goals as well should be the utmost task for leaders. To keep up a balance between inspiring and self-aligning is very important and then from here on leaders have to move towards strategic leadership. The author uses the term strategic leadership for it relates to a domain of forces that a leader has to self-align with and focus on not just the strategy but performance as well while taking up the role of strategist as well as accountability regime.

The third and last part of the book focuses on Leading. It covers themes and concepts relating to leading groups and management; leading change in different domains; and leading the future leaders or developing leaders. The idea revolves around the need to change task-based to team-based perspective with total or almost complete delegation. The benefits of delegation and teams are well-described in the book. In this age of globalization, with changing environments, a leader must possess a few characteristics and qualities to lead change in the organization to keep the companies afloat and help the people establish themselves. To understand and calculate the difference between training and development of force with the concern that the people stay with the organization and become part of the organization is an utmost task of a leader.

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The cover of the book is captivating and thought provoking which goes well by the theme. The author has done a brilliant job to meet the expectations of the avid readers and researchers by providing sufficient food for thought on the subject matter. Leadership, throughout the book, has been referred to as an art and science. It also proves that although many traits related to leadership have to be innate, the science and art of leadership can be learned and applied.